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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005897

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2009

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SUBJECT: MFA RAISES PNR, NORTHERN CYPRUS FLIGHTS, TSA
SECURITY DIRECTIVE FOR ISTANBUL AIRPORT (SBU)

REF: ANKARA 5765

Classified By: (U) Classified by Economic Counselor Thomas Goldberger for reasons 1.4 b,d.

1. (U) This is an action cable. See para 6.

2. (SBU) In an October 12 meeting with Econoff, Ahmet Bigali, the new MFA Director for Aviation Affairs, and Baris Kalkavan, also of the Aviation Affairs Department, raised passenger name records (PNR), direct U.S. flights to Ercan Airport and TSA's Emergency Amendment/Security Directive (EA/SD) for Istanbul Ataturk Airport.

3. (SBU) PNR: Econoff provided Kalkavan, who had earlier inquired about the U.S.-EU PNR arrangement, with a copy of the DHS Undertakings to the EU on protection of PNR data. Kalkavan stated that U.S. authorities had recently asked Turkish Airlines (THY) for PNR data, and that MFA was looking into the issue of whether sharing this information was consistent with Turkish privacy legislation. He stated that THY had previously been sharing Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) information with U.S. authorities, but did not provide further details on this arrangement. Econoff responded that data provided by THY would be afforded privacy protections in force under U.S. law.

4. (SBU) EA/SD: Bigali reiterated request (reftel) that TSA reconsider the emergency amendment in force for Istanbul Ataturk Airport.

5. (C) Cyprus: Bigali raised the issue of direct U.S. flights to northern Cyprus, emphasizing that Turkish public opinion expected the U.S. to take steps to ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. Kalkavan thanked the U.S. for removing the reference to Ercan as an "illegal" airport from the FAA's website. He asked whether the U.S. planned to use northern Cyprus as a rest/recuperation stop for U.S. troops in Iraq. In a subsequent telephone call, Kalkavan informed Econoff that the British Government was planning to do an aviation security assessment for northern Cyprus soon, and inquired about the timing of TSA's assessment of Ercan airport.

6. (SBU) Action Request: Embassy requests talking points for use with MFA on U.S. PNR requirements for Turkey.
EDELMAN